

How Can a Man or Woman Be Right with God? II

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Let's just review a little bit what we covered in part one. The reason that this becomes important is because we now see Protestantism 'cherry-picking' the Scriptures. What do I mean by that? *Going through and saying that all the teachings of Jesus was only for the Jews! And repentance was for the Jews!* Now all the positive things of *believe, God will be with you, all we have to do is be nice* and we're saved. We saw last time that there's more to it.

Romans 2:4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and long-suffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?"

- What happens when people are brought to repentance? *They see the things that they have done and what they've gone through, and how that has been against God!*

God is there merciful and gracious leading them to repentance!

- What do they do when they have been led to repentance?
- What do you repent of? *Sin, which the transgression of the Law, which means that when you repent you quit law-breaking!*

You're still not in right standing with God, yet! But here's a promise:

Verse 13: "Because the hearers of the Law are not just before God... [in a condition of justification] ...but the doers of the Law shall be justified."

These two verses tell us that you must repent and start obeying God; then He will justify you through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and His shed blood. We're going to expand that a little bit more from Rom. 3.

But remember this—and this is absolutely true—no law anywhere of any kind can justify you, because only the sacrifice of Christ and His shed blood can. The reason being is that the Law is not the sacrifice of God; it defines right from wrong.

- it tells you what sin is
- it tells you what righteousness is

As we saw in part one, in order to right with God, it requires the action of God. He leads us to repentance, and then it requires our action, which is that we repent and we start obeying God. There are four kinds of righteousness:

1. the letter of the Law

There are a lot of people in the world who are not

what you would call 'religious' but they are 'good' folks and hey keep the 'letter of the Law.' Are they justified before God? *No, they just keep the letter of the Law!* Not all of it, because they:

- want to have their own god
- want to have their own idols
- and surely don't want to go to church on the Sabbath

But the rest of it, they keep!

2. the spirit of the Law

This comes from the inside, which is God's Spirit! This is what happens after you receive the Spirit of God: you start to see the purpose of the Law, meaning the spiritual meaning of the Law.

3. the justification of God for the forgiveness of sin

In Rom. 3 this is called *righteousness!* That is, we have been put in right standing with God because we've repented and then baptized, and we are now walking in God's way.

4. the imputed righteousness that God gives to the believer

Why would He impute righteousness? *We'll see that in just a minute!*

The whole operation of what we're talking about: Romans 3:31: "Are we, then, abolishing *the Law* through faith? **MAY IT NEVER BE!** Rather, **we are establishing the Law.**"

How does this operation establish the Law? *It gives the individual the desire to keep the Law from within!* Not just to have a set of rules over here that you go by, but now it becomes part of your thinking and part of your heart.

The Proverbs says, 'As a man thinks in his heart, so he is.' So, the whole process of being justified with God is to put you in right standing with Him so that you can, with God's Spirit, become converted, which is a process.

Let's look at something in Rom. 4, because this and James 2 looks like they conflict with one another. But we will see that they really don't.

Romans 4:1: "What then shall we say *that* our father Abraham has found with respect to *the flesh*? For if Abraham was justified by works, he has a basis for boasting, but not before God. For what does the Scripture say? 'And Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness'" (vs 1-3). This is the imputation of righteousness.

Verse 4: “Now, to the one who works, the reward is not reckoned according to grace; rather, *it is reckoned* as a debt.”

If you work for someone for \$20/hr., at the end of 40 hours he owes you \$800. It doesn't work that way with the forgiveness of sin. There is no measurement of the forgiveness of sin or belief in God. Whereas, by law and by works there is a measurement.

Verse 5: “But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him Who justifies the ungodly, his faith is reckoned for righteousness.”

We're going to learn a very important lesson here. I've had several questions concerning the translation in James 2, and I will cover those. What we will do is look at the difference between what Paul is writing about and what Abraham did in his belief. What James is writing about, is what Abraham did by works.

James 2:14: “My brethren, what good *does* it do, if anyone says *that he* has faith, and does not have works? Is faith able to save him?” That is faith being alone.

Verse 15: “Now then, if there be a brother or sister who is naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; be warmed and be filled,’ and does not give to them the things necessary for the body, what good is it? In the same way also, **faith, if it does not have works, is dead, by itself**” (vs 15-17). Faith means *belief!* Whatever you believe you can say is *belief*.

Verse 18: “But someone is going to say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ *My answer is:* You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works.” That is not double-talk.

The *King James* says: “...shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.” That's not what the Greek means.

FV: “...You prove your faith to me through your works, and I will prove my faith to you through my works.”

The answer is that everyone has action upon what they believe. Whatever you believe, you act upon, whether for good or for evil. Think about some of the things that you act upon, or don't act upon because you don't believe it. *Not believing is still a belief!* Your belief is to choose not to believe, and you act upon that non-belief. Isn't that what atheists do? *Yes!*

It is more dramatic this way. Whatever faith you have, you prove it to me by your works. Whatever faith I have, I'll prove it to you by my works.

Verse 19: “Do you believe that God is one? You do well *to believe this*. Even the demons believe and tremble *in fear*.” They believe that there is a God, and they know what's going to happen to them and they tremble. But they will not repent and act upon the belief that they need to; rather they choose their own belief. Do demons act upon what they believe in Satan the devil? *Of course they do!*

Verse 20: “But are you willing to understand, O foolish man, that faith without works is dead?... [here's what appears to be a contradiction]: ...Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up Isaac, his own son, upon the altar?” (vs 20-21).

The other one said that Abraham didn't work. This one says that he's justified by works. What's the difference? *We'll see in just a minute!*

Verse 22: “Do you not see that faith was working together with his works, and by works *his* faith was perfected? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, ‘Now, Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him for righteousness’; **and he was called a friend of God**. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only” (vs 22-24).

We're going to see what is the difference. Why did Paul say that Abraham was justified without works? *That was imputed to him for righteousness*. Why did James say that Abraham was justified by works?

This is a contradiction that very few people in Protestant land out there understand. Let's look at it. Let's see the difference. We're going to see that there are two things that this is referring to as to what Abraham did.

In the first account we're going to see that God spoke to Abraham and promised him something that only God could do.

Genesis 15:4: “And behold, the Word of the LORD *came* to him saying, ‘This man... [Eliezer, the Syrian] ...shall not be your heir...’” Abraham had no children and he was 85-years-old; not much hope of having children at 85. Yet, he had to wait another 14 years.

“...but he that shall come forth out of your own loins shall be your heir’.... [that's quite something] ...And He brought him outside and said...” (vs 4-5). God is going to make it even greater than when He told Abraham that he was going to have a son.

“...‘Look now toward the heavens and number the stars—if you are able to count them.’ And He said to him, ‘So shall your seed be’” (v 5).

Can you count the stars? *You might start, but the human eye surely doesn't see all the stars!*

So, here was something greater and beyond Abraham's capacity to do. Just like God forgiving our sins. It is greater and beyond our capacity to have our sins forgiven apart from Christ. *We believe!*

Verse 6: "And he believed in the LORD.... [believed what he was told] ...And He accounted it to him for righteousness." That's quite something! He said, 'Okay, God, I believe You.' Then we know the rest of the story in Gen. 15. This is the first account that Paul is talking about. We'll see how he explains that in Rom. 4 in just a bit.

Let's look at the other incident that happened after Isaac had been born and was a young lad. In the first instance, Abraham believed and there was *no work* to do. The work to do was an impossibility and only God could number the stars and count them. But Abraham believed God when God said, 'I will give you your own heir and increase them like the stars of heaven and as the sand of the seashore,' as He said later.

Isaac was born and he must have been somewhere around 15-years-old. {transcriber's note: Fred has since proven the age of 15} We know that he had to be less than 20, because 20 was counted as a man; up to that point a lad. He's called a lad here.

This is what James is talking about. We have two accounts of Abraham: one required belief and there was no action that he could do, no work that was required but believe what God said.

It's just like when we repent and have our sins forgiven and we believe that they are forgiven. God does not drop down a stamp saying 'Paid in Full.' You know that they are forgiven because God said so and God cannot lie! If God tells us this, we believe it. There are some things that we believe that requires no action. There are some things that we are told to do and to believe God then requires action. This is what Gen. 22 is about, and this is what James was writing about.

Genesis 22:1: "And it came to pass after these things that God tested Abraham..." Sometimes there will things to test us. In Gen. 15 God didn't say that He was going to test Abraham. He just gave the promise, and Abraham believed Him.

"...and said to him, 'Abraham!' And he said, 'Here I am.' And He said, 'Take now your son, your only *son* Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains, which I will tell you'" (vs 1-2). If he believed God he would do that. There was something required to do, and there was a work associated with it.

Abraham believed God, and this is what James is writing about. God told him to go do something, and to believe God means you go do that

something, as God has said to do.

Verse 3: "And Abraham rose up early in the morning and saddled his donkey, and took two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son. And he split the wood for the burnt offering, and rose up and went to the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said to his young men, 'You stay here with the donkey, and I and the boy will go yonder and worship, and come again to you.' And Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it upon Isaac his son..." (vs 3-6).

In this case we have a parallel between Abraham as a type of God the Father and Isaac as a type of Christ. So, the wood that Isaac was carrying was a type of cross that later Jesus carried.

"...And he took the fire *pot* in his hand, and a knife. And they both went together. And Isaac spoke to Abraham his father and said, 'My father.' And he said, 'Here I *am*, my son.' And he said, 'Behold the fire and the wood. But where is the lamb for a burnt offering?' And Abraham said, 'My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering.'..." (vs 6-8). Isaac believed that!

"...So, they both went on together" (v 8). The question always comes up: Why would Abraham even think of doing that when it was his only son, his only heir? *We don't get the answer until the New Testament!* Sometimes there are things in the Old Testament that are not answered until you get to the New Testament. So, for the Jews who don't accept the New Testament, they can never answer the question as to why Abraham did it without saying a word. Why, also, Isaac believed him and: What if God had not provided the burnt offering animal? Would he had offered Isaac for a burnt offering? *We get the answer here:*

Hebrews 11:17: "By faith Abraham, when he was being tried, offered up Isaac; and he who had received the promises offered up *his* only begotten *son* of whom it was said, 'In Isaac shall your Seed be called'" (vs 17-18).

Remember, God promised Abraham that through his seed the whole world would be blessed. How could that happen if Isaac was offered as a sacrifice?

Verse 19: "**Because he reckoned that God was able to raise him even from among the dead...**" That is tremendous faith in God!

"...from which he also received him in a figurative way" (v 19)—because his body was dead—sexually speaking. The body of Sarah was dead—sexually speaking.

So, God performed a miracle for Isaac to be

born. He was born and Abraham—in his own mind and in his face—said that if God said to go do this, then He can raise him from the dead. That’s the kind of faith that Abraham had in God. He could say, ‘God is going to provide.’

Let’s continue the rest of the story. If Isaac was 15-years-old then it meant that Abraham was 115-years-old at this point. Let’s see the rest of the account:

Genesis 22:9: “And they came to the place of which God had told him. And Abraham built an altar there...” You get stones and you put them together and make a little altar.

“...and laid the wood in order. And he bound his son Isaac and laid him on the wood, upon the altar. And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son” (vs 9-10). That’s right up to the last second!

Why would Abraham be tested this way? *The promises that God gave to Abraham were so great that God had to know absolutely for sure that Abraham believed Him! We have the two instances:*

- 1) Gen. 15, no work required
- 2) Gen. 22, a work required

When Abraham did that, to reach down and get the knife, v 11: “And the angel of the LORD called to him from the heavens and said, ‘Abraham! Abraham!’ And he said, ‘Here I *am*.’ And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand upon the lad, nor do anything to him, **for now I know that you fear God**, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me” (vs 11-12). This was quite a test.

Likewise, God tests all of us to know whether we love and fear Him. That’s all part of life. Most of the movies that have depicted this incident with Abraham, they have Abraham almost cursing at God, and Isaac rebelling against it. *That’s not what the Bible says!*

Verse 13: “And Abraham lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, behind *him* a ram was entangled in a thicket by its horns...” How did that get there? *I imagine that Abraham was building the altar, which took a little while!* He and Isaac was putting up the stones and laying down the wood. I imagine that they were looking around all the time, because Abraham said that God would provide a burnt offering. How did this ram get there? *One of two ways:*

- 1) snuck up there and wasn’t seen
- 2) God instantly provided a special ram for that sacrifice

—which would also be a type of Christ’s sacrifice, as a substitutionary sacrifice for the forgiveness of

our sins. Christ died for our sins rather than we dying for our sins; one of the two. I’ll bet that they were both relieved that that took place.

“...And Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up for a burnt offering instead of his son” (v 13). So important was this! We need to understand how important this was in the history of mankind and in the history of the Church and the plan of God. We could say that right at this point was a real testing point for all the plan of God.

Moses was not quite a believing as Abraham. Moses was told by God to go over to this particular rock and you *speak* to the rock and it’s going to produce water. Moses went up, because he was all upset with the people... Here’s another lesson: never let people so upset you that you sin against God. Moses went up and *struck* the rock. Water came out, but God asked Moses why he didn’t speak to the rock. God said, ‘You didn’t believe Me, therefore, you’re not going to see the promised land.’

You read that that is said at least a dozen times through the book of Numbers and Deuteronomy when it comes to that point.

- this is supreme belief
- this is supreme obedience

Taking the most precious thing in your life, taking the promise of God, to take Isaac out there and offer him for a sacrifice.

The whole history of God’s plan went forward from that time. Had Abraham failed this test, then there would have been some other account of something else. We don’t know what that would be; we’re not told. So, to speculate would not be correct.

Verse 14: “And Abraham called the name of that place The LORD Will Provide; so that it is said *until* this day, ‘In the mount of the LORD it will be provided.’ And the angel of the LORD called to Abraham out of heaven the second time” (vs 14-15).

Notice what this faith in God motivated God to do. This becomes important. A lot of people think that you can never please God, because God is so righteous. We’re going to see that, yes, you can please God with your faith, belief and love toward Him. It inspires God to do things above and beyond.

Verse 16: “And said, ‘**By Myself** have I sworn’...”

- Does God ever lie? *No!*
- What is swearing by men? *That’s affirming to tell the truth, because men are suspected of lying!*
- God does not need to swear
- He didn’t swear by the heavens

- He didn't swear by the earth
- He swore by His existence

“...**By Myself...**” So, God was directly involved in this, which means that everything that God had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—and Jacob was not yet born—was going to happen exactly in the way that God said. So this sealed the plan of God from that point until the end.

“...‘**By Myself** have I sworn,’ says the LORD, ‘because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son; that in blessing I will bless you...’” (vs 16-17).

Not all blessings are those that you are going to see, because the greatest blessing is going to happen to us is going to take place at the resurrection when we receive eternal life.

“...and in multiplying I will multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens...” (v 17). Abraham was only able to know that Jacob was born to Isaac, because Abraham died when Jacob was two years old. That's hardly the stars of heaven!

“...and as the sand, which is upon the seashore...” (v 17). That's hardly a truckload of sand. So, God was talking about a long way down into future history. That's why, if you have never read any books on modern Israel you better get some of those and read them, because God has fulfilled His promise.

“...And your seed shall possess the gate of his enemies. And in your seed... [a prophecy of Christ] ...shall all the nations of the earth be blessed...” (vs 17-18). Think about that for a minute. That covers the whole plan of God down to:

- the first coming of Christ
- the second coming of Christ
- the Kingdom of God on earth
- all of those in the first resurrection
- all of those who come into the Kingdom of God through the Millennium
- all of those who come into the Kingdom of God through second resurrection

This is an all inclusive promise! Why?

“...**because you have obeyed My voice**” (v 18). That's the most important thing!

In the first instance, Abraham believed what God said. He believed the impossible. In this case, he did the impossible in obeying the voice of God!

This tells us something very important concerning faith. We are to believe, and when there is something to do, we are to do it! What is the whole lesson of the Bible? It's in very simple terms:

- **you obey** the voice of God
- or**

- **you disobey** the voice of God

That's it! You can reduce it to those simple terms! Let's also see how God described obeying His voice and what that meant. This becomes very important for all of those neo-Protestants in the world today who are moving toward a New Age religion.

Genesis 26:2: “And the LORD appeared to him [Isaac] and said, ‘Do not go down into Egypt. Live in the land, which I shall tell you of. Stay in this land, and I will be with you and bless you, for to you and to your seed, I will give all these lands; and I will establish the oath, which I swore to Abraham your father. And I will multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and will give to your seed all these lands. And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, **because Abraham obeyed My voice...**’” (vs 2-5).

The New Testament says that ‘if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. What is it that we need to do? **Obey the voice of God!**

Someone will say, ‘I can't hear the voice of God.’ *That's why you have the Bible; it's written down so you can know what the voice of God is!*

- Are these the words of God? *Yes!*
- Are the Gospels the words of Christ, Who was God manifested in the flesh? *Yes!*
- Did God inspire the writers of the Old and New Testaments to write and preserve His Word? *Yes!*

That's why in *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* there are commentaries on how God preserved His Word and had it canonized, made it the official Word of God. That's very important!

“...and kept My charge...” (v 5). A charge is a lot stronger than just talking. It's like in 1st and 2nd Timothy how Paul wrote to Timothy and said, ‘I charge you before God, Who shall judge the living and the dead; **preach the Word!**’ what's a minister supposed to do? **Preach the Word! Not his own ideas!**

“...My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (v 5). Someone is going to say, ‘What are those?’ Since God is the same ‘yesterday, today and forever’ these are the same ones that God later gave to Israel. It would have to be.

Is God going to have Abraham obey different commandments, statutes and laws than what He gave to Israel? *Of course not!* There you have it. Now you see the difference between the two accounts. Both of them are correct because each one is talking about a different incident and account that Abraham did. But he did both because **he believed God!** That's what is important. Remember:

- **belief** always has some kind of action following it
- **disbelief** has the opposite kind of action following it

One man announced to his son that he's now keeping the Sabbath and Holy Days, and the son said, 'I'll believe it when God comes down and tells me to keep the Sabbath.' He answered and said, 'God already did that! Are you sure you really want to meet God?' God said, 'Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it Holy.'

- Was Abraham in right standing with God? *Yes!*
- Was he justified before God because of God's blessing? *Yes!*

Now then, he makes a comparison.

(go to the next track)

Who did the work for the forgiveness of our sins? *Jesus Christ, with His sacrifice!*

We are to believe in that sacrifice, and that's why no work or no law can substitute for the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and the forgiveness we receive through that. But that does not mean that we are not to keep the laws and commandments of God as we saw with Abraham. There's the parallel here.

Just like Abraham believed God when God said, 'So shall your seed be,' that was counted to him for righteousness. Just like we believe in the forgiveness of sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, that is counted to us for righteousness to justify us and put us in right standing with God. ***Nothing else can do that!***

However, we need to follow through as Abraham did, to obey the voice of God, keep His charge, His commandments, His statutes and His laws. We will see why God did all of this so that we could receive the forgiveness of sin.

Romans 4:17: "Exactly as it is written: 'I have made you a father of many nations' before God in Whom he believed, Who gives life to the dead, and calls the things that are not as though they are; and who against hope believed in hope, in order that he might become a father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, 'So shall your seed be.' And he, not being weak in the faith, considered not his own body, already having become dead, being about one hundred years old, nor *did he consider* the deadness of Sarah's womb; and **he did not doubt the promise of God through unbelief; rather, he was strengthened in the faith, giving glory to God**" (vs 17-20).

The more you believe God, the more you're strengthened in faith. The more you understand that

and realize that everything comes from God, that's how you give glory to God. *There isn't a single thing that we have that we haven't received!*

I've said to some who are kind of smart-alecky about things—especially young people—I say, 'Okay, let's do the belly button test. Feel right down here where your belly button is, what does that tell you? *You came from your mother and father and you don't have anything you didn't receive!*' Likewise, every human being is the same way.

Abraham didn't doubt through unbelief. When we understand that, that is what is so important here.

Verse 21: "For he was **fully persuaded**..." I gave a sermon years ago: *Almost Persuaded*. We're not to be *almost* persuaded; we're to be like Abraham, "...**fully** persuaded..."

"...that what He [God] has promised, He is also able to do" (v 21). God promised a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sin, and that sacrifice was the One Who became Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh. He promised that and was able to do it.

The same way as it was with Abraham, v 22: As a result, it was also imputed to him for righteousness." If you believe God—what He says—then when He tells you something to do, you will do it. Believing God—in what He says—is the key to what is called here *imputed righteousness!* That puts you in right standing with God.

How many people in the world hear of God, but don't believe Him? It's like those who discuss the commandments; they say: 'Well, today it's impracticable to keep the seventh-day Sabbath. Sunday is the day everybody keeps, so therefore, 'we should go with Sunday because everybody is doing it.' But that's not what God says! That's part of the world! So, the Sabbath becomes important.

Why is all this history written for us, which is over 3,000 years ago? Here's the reason:

Verse 23: "But it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him." In other words, he's saying that there's no reason that we—at the time Paul wrote this, or we today—would have the account of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob if there wasn't something in it that we were to understand. *But there is!*

Verse 24: "Rather, *it was also written* for our sakes, to whom it shall be imputed—to those who believe in Him Who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offenses... [because of our sins] ...and was raised for our justification" (vs 24-25)—which means that Christ, as our High Priest and sitting at the right hand of God, through Whom we pray to the Father. Christ

intervenes and brings about our justification or right standing with the Father.

So, yes, *we can be in right standing with God **IF** we believe, and **IF** we act upon that belief!* It works both ways. Here Paul explains it again. This whole operation is called *grace*, which means *the freely-given blessing of God that we cannot earn! That we cannot work for!*

Romans 5:1: “Therefore, having been justified by faith...”—because we believe God. Not only believe *in* Him, not only believe that He does exist, but *we believe Him* and what He has told us.

“...we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (v 1). We’re no longer enemies of God, because before we repent and are baptized...

Rom. 8 tells us what the human nature is. This tells us how people in the world react to God.

Romans 8:7: “Because the carnal mind... [the natural, normal human mind that all human beings have, without the Spirit of God] ...*is* enmity... [an enemy] ...against God, for it is not subject to the Law of God; neither indeed can it *be*.”

What happens when God begins to deal with us, there comes a point when we see that our lives—in disobedience to God—is leading to futility, emptiness, wretchedness, and so forth. God brings us to the understanding that we need to stop that. Then He brings us to the understanding that we need to repent and then to the understanding that we need to keep His laws and commandments. All of that is by faith and by belief so that we are no longer an enemy of God. We don’t fight God and say, ‘Yeah, I know that God says that we should do thus and such, but I don’t believe that, and I’m going to do otherwise.’

Once we have repented and are baptized and receive the Spirit of God—no longer carnal-minded—then we are in a different category before God.

Romans 5:2: “**Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand...**” Our standing before God now becomes one that God blesses rather than one that God curses. The ‘wages of sin is death’ and that brings curses. Repentance and yielding to God brings forgiveness and grace, and God will forgive those sins and blot them out. Grace is like an umbrella of God’s separation of us from the world, though we live in the world. The world can’t tell any difference in us from anybody else in the world. But we have access to God the Father.

Let’s notice how this works, and let’s see how our prayer lives and our access to God the Father and Jesus Christ is really a tremendous thing!

The Word of God is the only book in the world that can do this, because the words that are here are understood *spiritually*. It does something to our heart and mind, because these are the words of God! It convicts us of sin so that we repent.

Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God *is* living...” Even though it’s written and printed. *The wages of sin is death!* That’s what it says and that’s a fact. Repentance and forgiveness leads to life.

“...and powerful...” (v 12). So powerful that no one escapes the Word of God, whether they like it or not, or know it or not. Everyone is under God’s jurisdiction, whether unto life and salvation, or whether unto sin and to death. That’s just the way the whole world is.

“...and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of both soul and spirit, *and* of both *the* joints and *the* marrow, and *is* able to discern *the* thoughts and intents of *the* heart” (v 12). That’s why all repentance and confession of sin goes to God; *no man can forgive sin!*

Notice how powerful this is, v 13: “And there is not a created thing that is not manifest in His sight; but all things *are* naked and laid bare before the eyes of Him to Whom we must give account. Having, therefore, a great High Priest, *Who* has passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, we should hold fast the confession of *our faith*” (vs 13-14).

- God is for us
- God loves us
- God cares for us
- God has called us
- God has given us forgiveness of sin
- God has given us continuous access to Him
 - ✓ through His grace
 - ✓ through prayer
 - ✓ anytime
 - ✓ anywhere
 - ✓ anyplace

Verse 15: “For we do not have a High Priest Who cannot empathize with our weaknesses...” Not a god way off that doesn’t understand. *No!* He came in the flesh!

“...but *One Who was tempted in all things according to the likeness of our own temptations; yet, He was without sin*” (v 15). That is to inspire us to come to God.

Verse 16: “Therefore, we should come with boldness to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.” That’s why it is the imputed righteousness, because this is an operation that Christ Himself

alone has done.

No work that we can do can substitute for that. We will see what this is to inspire us to do.

Romans 5:2: “Through Whom we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God. And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance...” (vs 2-3).

He wants us to endure to the end and realize that living in this world may be difficult, but He is there to help us.

Verse 4: “And endurance *brings forth* character, and character *brings forth* hope. And the hope *of God* never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, **which has been given to us**” (vs 4-5).

That’s the thing that’s important. The whole point of our living this life in the flesh now is to receive the Holy Spirit of God to let God’s *spiritual work* be done in us, so that *at the resurrection* we may receive eternal life.

God’s plan was appointed way before the creation of the world, v 6: “For even when we were without strength, **at the appointed time** Christ died for *the* ungodly.” That’s quite a statement. It was “...at the appointed time...”

Abraham didn’t know anything about the appointed time. I want to show you a verse that is a summary of the whole plan of God for redemption beginning with the sin of Adam and Eve. That’s amazing! God is judging Satan and He reveals the outline of His whole plan.

Genesis 3:15: “And I will put enmity between you and the woman... [also a prophecy of the Church] ...and between your seed and her Seed... [prophecy of Christ] ...He will bruise your head... [fulfilled in Rev. 20] ...and you shall bruise His heel”—which is the crucifixion.

Right there is an outline of the whole plan of God in the third chapter of Genesis, right after the first sin of Adam and Eve. But Adam and Eve did not know when the appointed time would be. Abraham didn’t know when the appointed time would be. God knew the appointed time; He set the time. That’s why it was done on the Passover.

Romans 5:7: For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, **when we were still sinners, Christ died for us**” (vs 7-8). That means for us before we were ever born! This is quite a fantastic thing!

Verse 10: “For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son...” In other words, when Christ, being on the cross and dying, said:

- to those who crucified Him
- for those who were in the mob and shouting, ‘Crucify Him!’
- for the priests taunting Him saying, ‘If You’re the Christ, come down off the cross and then we’ll believe you’

‘Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!’ Isn’t that something? *That is against all human nature, because human nature is to take vengeance!* Because of the nature of man and the way that he is, man needs:

- forgiveness
- hope
- mercy
- God’s way

Before we were ever born, this happened: **Christ died for us!** That’s the start! Here’s what comes next:

Verse 9: “Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood... [and put in right standing with God through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ] ...**we shall be saved from wrath through Him**. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, **we shall be saved by His life**” (vs 9-10)—because He was resurrected from the dead!

Verse 11: “And not only *this*, but we also boast in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by Whom we have now received the reconciliation.”

Hebrews 9:24: “For Christ has not entered into the Holy places made by *human* hands... [the temple on earth] ...*which are mere* copies of the true...”

God gave the plans of the **tabernacle** to Moses. He gave the plans of the **temple** to David on how to build it, so that it would be built after what takes place in heaven. So, Jesus did not go into the temple:

“...rather, **He has entered into heaven itself**, now to appear in the presence of God for us” (v 24). Christ is for us; God the Father is for us.

The Paul emphasizes something here in comparison with the sacrifices at the temple:

Verse 25: “Not that He should offer Himself many times, even as the high priest enters into the Holy of Holies year by year with *the* blood of others... [goats, bulls and so forth] ...for then it would have been necessary for Him to suffer many times since *the* foundation of *the* world. But now,

once and for all, in the consummation of the ages..." (vs 25-26).

When Christ died that was the beginning of the consummation of the ages in relationship to God's plan for mankind, but the end of that is a long way off.

"...He has been manifested for *the* purpose of removing sin through His sacrifice of *Himself*" (v 26). Therefore, ***nothing but repentance and belief in the sacrifice of Christ can forgive sin!*** The Catholic priest cannot forgive sin, saying, 'Your sins are forgiven, but you have to do 200 hail Marys and 200 our fathers.' ***NO! You go to God and confess from the heart, from the innermost part of your being, and then your sins are forgiven!***

Verse 28: "So Christ, having been offered **once** to bear *the* sins of many, will appear *the* second time without sin... [without being a sin-sacrifice] ...unto salvation to those who are eagerly awaiting Him."

Hebrews 10:9: "Then He [Christ] said, 'Lo, I come to do Your will, O God.' He takes away the first *covenant*... [with Israel] ...in order that He may establish the second *covenant*... [with the Church] ...by Whose will **we are sanctified**... [*made right before God*] ...through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ **once for all**. Now, every high priest stands ministering day by day, offering the same sacrifices repeatedly, which are never able to remove sins; but He, after offering one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at *the* right hand of God" (vs 9-12).

See how much greater this is? This is why the grace of God is so fantastic. Now we have access to God the Father—the Sovereign of the universe—and we have access to Jesus Christ—God manifested in the flesh—and He is there as our advocate and to help us in a time of need.

Verse 13: "Since that time, He is waiting until His enemies are placed *as* a footstool for His feet. For by one offering He has obtained eternal perfection *for* those who are sanctified" (vs 13-14). ***Not those who are not sanctified!*** You are sanctified when you repent and receive God's Spirit.

Verse 15: "And the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after He had previously said, "This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days," says *the* Lord, "I will give My Laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds; and their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again."'" (vs 15-17).

This is what the whole operation is: *How you can be in right standing with God!*

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 2:4, 13
- 2) Romans 3:31
- 3) Romans 4:1-5
- 4) James 2:14-24
- 5) Genesis 15:4-6
- 6) Genesis 22:1-8
- 7) Hebrews 11:17-19
- 8) Genesis 22:9-18
- 9) Genesis 26:2-5
- 10) Romans 4:17-25
- 11) Romans 5:1
- 12) Romans 8:7
- 13) Romans 5:2
- 14) Hebrews 4:12-16
- 15) Romans 5:2-6
- 16) Genesis 3:15
- 17) Romans 5:7-8, 10, 9-11
- 18) Hebrews 9:24-26, 28
- 19) Hebrews 10:9-17

Scripture referenced, not quoted: Revelation 20

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